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Micrometer Scale A, 1882.

The following history of the National Committee on Micrometry, the report of that Committee at the Chicago meeting, the report of of Prof. Rogers on the standard Micrometer Scale A, 1882, and the rules for the custody and use of the bar are brought together here in order that the value of the Micrometer may be better appreciated and its use more generally understood.

HISTORY OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON MICROMETRY.

At its session in Indianapolis, in August, 1878, the American Society of Microscopists adopted a resolution referring to the various microscopical societies certain questions pertaining to micrometry. It soon became evident that satisfactory progress toward a general agreement could not be reached without securing concerted action by the appointment of a committee representing the views of various societies. In accordance with many requests, the undersigned being then president of the American Society Microscopists and also president of the Troy Scientific Association, one of the oldest of the societies interested, brought the matter before the Troy society, which thereupon addressed a communication to all the microscopical societies in the country inviting their co-operation in the appointment of a national committee on micrometry. Nearly all the active societies, as well as many distinguished specialists in this branch of science, returned a prompt reply, approving the project and furnishing valuable hints and advice as to its execution. Many of the societies nominated members to represent them upon the committee, which ultimately became organized as follows:

Prof. Wm. Ashburner, San Francisco Microscopical Society;
Prof. F. A. P. Barnard, L. L. D., *Chairman*, American Metrological Society; Lester Curtis, M. D., State Microscopical Society of

Illinois; Geo. E. Fell, M. D., Buffalo Microscopical Club; Henry Jameson, M. D., Indiana Microscopical Society; Prof. S. A. Lattimore, Rochester Academy of Sciences; Rev. Samuel Lockwood, State Microscopical Society of New Jersey; Prof. Ed. W. Morley, Microscopical sub-section American Association Advancement of Science; Joseph G. Richardson, M. D., American Postal Microscopical Club; Prof. Wm. A. Rogers, American Society of Microscopists; Prof. Stephen P. Sharpless, Boston Microscopical Society; Prof. H. L. Smith, Hobart College, Geneva, N. Y.; Prof. A. H. Tuttle, Microscopical Section Tyndall Association, Columbus, O.; C. M. Vorce, Cleveland Microscopical Society; R. H. Ward, M. D., *Secretary*, Troy Scientific Association; J. J. Woodward, M. D., U. S. A. Medical Museum, Washington, D. C.

Finding nearly all the societies to be in favor of adopting the *micron* ($\mu = \frac{1}{1000}$ m m.) for our unit in Micrometry, the $\frac{1}{1000}$ millimeter being more convenient than the $\frac{1}{100}$ as well as more in accordance with usage abroad, this unit was adopted, and a communication was tendered to the Buffalo meeting of the American Society of Microscopists, proposing the withdrawal of its recommendation of $\frac{1}{100}$ m m. as a micrometric unit. This report was accepted, its proposal adopted, and the subject referred back to the committee with instructions to report further at the next annual meeting. This Society subsequently nominated a member as its special representative on the committee.

The other branch of the committee work, the selection or preparation of a standard micrometer, presented greater difficulties and caused greater delays. After much conference and correspondence, it was decided to procure, from a source capable of giving it originally an official character, a new scale as nearly indistructable as possible and of carefully determined value. The U. S. Bureau of Weights and Measures, through the kindness of Prof. J. E. Hilgard, undertook to prepare and authenticate such a standard, and, after delays unavoidable in such work, a scale excellently ruled on a platinum-iridium bar and verified with great care by Prof. C. S. Pierce was placed at the disposal of the committee in August, 1882. A sub-committee on testing this micrometer was appointed, on whose behalf Prof. W. A. Rogers subjected the plate to a prolonged

and elaborate study which was not completed until August, 1883. It then seemed inexpedient to incur the great further delay of a repetition of the measurements by each member of the sub-committee, since the plate, being known to be as accurately prepared as could be hoped for at the present time, and being offered with the official sanction of the U. S. Bureau of Weights and Measures, was all that could be asked under the circumstances, and since discussions as to the ratio of its spacings might be completed, if capable of ever being completed beyond the possibility of further question, as well after its adoption as before. The committee therefore accepted the plate and unanimously tendered it to the American Society of Microscopists.

R. H. WARD,

Secretary of the National Committee on Micrometry.